

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 271431Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9643

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1046

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CGEN, EEWT, PFOR, BU, LE, BE

SUBJECT: DETENTION OF ABBOTT LABORATORIES EMPLOYEE

EUR/EE FOR AMBASSADOR HERZ

REF: A) STATE 12#900; B) SOFIA 1008

1. AS INDICATED WOULD BE DONE IN REFTEL B, CHARGE ON MAY 23 RAISED ISPENTCHIAN AND ABBOTT LABORATORIES CASE WITH MINISTRY FOREIGN TRADE DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR DEVELOPED CAPITALIST COUNTRIES, PETAR BASHIKAROV. CHARGE PRESENTED CASE IN DETAIL, EMPHASIZING AND REITERATING POSSIBLE UNFAVORABLE REPERCUSSIONS CURRENT BULGARIAN TREATMENT OF ISPENTCHIAN COULD HAVE NOT ONLY ON ABBOTT NEGOTIATIONS, BUT ON US-BULGARIAN BUSINESS RELATIONS IN GENERAL.

2. BASHIKAROV REPLIED THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE LUKANOV TO SAY MATTER WAS NOT IN COMPETENCE OF MFT AND TO SUGGEST THAT AS ISPENTCHIAN IS NOT AMERICAN CITIZEN IT WAS ALSO NOT MATTER CONCERNING US EMBASSY.

3. CHARGE SAID SHE WOULD LIKE TO ACCEPT LUKANOV'S ADVICE BUT COULD NOT SINCE ABBOTT IS AMERICAN FIRM AND MFT DOES HAVE RESPONSIBILITY IN BUSINESS RELATIONS. THEREFORE IT WAS APPROPRIATE MATTER FOR EMBASSY AND MFT, AND UNDOUBTEDLY CASE WOULD BE MATTER OF FURTHER DISCUSSION.
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4. OBVIOUSLY ON INSTRUCTIONS, BASHIKAROV CONTINUED TO REITERATE HIS ORIGINAL POSITION, BUT AT CONCLUSION OF DISCUSSION SAID HE WOULD REPORT CONVERSATION TO "HIGHER" AUTHORITIES. HE INDICATED THAT IF ABBOTT

LABORATORIES REPRESENTATIVE WISHED TO DISCUSS CASE WITH
MFT THAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE.

5. COMMENT: SUGGEST DEPT RECOMMEND TO ABBOTT THAT IF
ITS THREATS ARE TO BEAR FRUIT, IT WOULD BE WELL FOR IT
TO SEND VERY SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND LAWYER TO SOFIA
TO DISCUSS CASE AND POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS WITH BULGARIAN
AUTHORITIES. NO ABBOTT OFFICIAL HAS BEEN IN SOFIA SINCE
APRIL 30 AND INTEREST IN ISPENTCHIAN'S WELFARE NOT
FORCEFULLY BEING PRESSED HOME BY ABBOTT. ALSO SUGGEST
ABBOTT RAISE ISSUE IN BEIRUT AGAIN AS WELL AS WITH
BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON. SHOULD EMBASSY BE
ASKED TO RAISE ISSUE AGAIN WITH GOB IT WILL DO SO WITH
MFA ON BASIS OF USG-GOB RELATIONS AND NOT WITH
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE.

6. FYI: KAZANDZHIEV, LAWYER ABBOTT HAS RETAINED IN
CASE, HAS INFORMED ABBOTT AND EMBASSY THAT BULGARIAN
LAW PERMITS DETENTION FOR TWO MONTHS WITHOUT CHARGES
BEING PLACED AND THAT CHIEF PROSECUTOR CAN PROLONG
PERIOD UP TO FOUR MONTHS. KAZANDZHIEV, HOWEVER,
EXPRESSED OPINION TO CHARGE THAT CHARGES WOULD BE
PLACED BY END OF INITIAL TWO MONTH PERIOD, E.E. PRIOR
TO JUNE 28.

7. IF APPROPRIATE, DEPT REPEAT BEIRUT.
BATJER

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED

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